AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

Applicant amends the specification at page 3, line 6 (in the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 19) by changing "a" to "an":

According to the invention, the cars of the car rental system can be made operable by having a renter present a digital key issued from the car rental system. The digital key specifies the starting date and time of a given rental transaction, and the identification of the car the key is for. The digital key is further signed by the car rental system for authenticity. The way a digital key gets into a renter's hand is as follows. A prospective renter makes online reservation over the Web (i.e., the World Wide Web portion of the Internet) and downloads into a portable storage device a digital key which can be used to operate the reserved car on the day the reservation is made for. On the pickup day, the renter goes to the car and inserts the portable storage device into a slot on the car. Upon successful verification of the digital key, the car is enabled and the renter can keep the car until he or she wants to return the car. The return process starts by having the renter obtain a̶ an invalidated digital key from the car. Once the rental car invalidates the digital key provided by the renter, the renter can no longer operate the rental car. Since the in-car controller is able to decipher the given authorization information, there is no need to re-program the in-car controller for each renter.